

CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, EDITORS OF 'CHAMBERS'S INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE,' 'CHAMBERS'S EDUCATIONAL COURSE,' &c.

No. 346. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 1850.

PRICE 1½d.

A BREACH OF CONFIDENCE.

THE SECOND.

Worm the notion that amongst the 'Curiosities of Literature' of the present day, the advertisements take the chief place, we will proceed to consider a few more of the class most in vogue just now in our newspapers—the weekly ones especially.

There are many people who go to their club or reading-rooms, and come back saying, 'There is nothing in the papers to-day'—positively nothing in the marvellous mass of intelligence that has come over arid deserts and across leaping wildernesses of waters—toiling up mountain-passes, penetrating almost trackless woods—rattling in *malle-postes* over paved high-roads, stopped at frontiers, scrutinised by jealous police, whirled along hundreds of miles of railway, fumigated in plague-lazarettos—in fact, brought to us by any means that money, interest, tact, venture, or thought, could command! But even beyond all this there is yet 'something.' In every column of the advertisements are the records of two or three dozen romances, or fights for existence, planned with the most brain-racking ingenuity that desperation can induce. I do not mean in this place to allude to the more serious experiments upon the charity or credulity of human nature. The absurd and comical are better suited to my purpose.

'Know Thyself' was, and ever has been, considered a saying of great wisdom: esteemed, moreover, as an exceedingly difficult estimation to arrive at. Bah! It is now a mere matter of a shilling, or a few postage stamps. For this small outlay, London at present overruns with learned professors, male and female, who will tell you anything.

The first that I applied to was the most omniscient. This was his advertisement:—

CLAIRVOYANCE.—HENRI, the CLAIRVOYANTE, is now in London, and any lady or gentleman wishing to try the power of clairvoyance, may receive answers to any three questions, relating to the past, the present, or the future, on receipt of a letter enclosing a lock of hair, with the real initials, and one shilling, with a directed envelop.—Address —. The strictest secrecy may be relied on. Place the shilling between cards.

I obeyed his directions, and sent in the following questions:—

1. Will the enterprise succeed between now and July 12?
2. Did the letter arrive safely at its destination?
3. Will the writer go abroad this year?

In a day or two the same note I had sent was returned, with the answers written against the questions. They were—

1. No.
2. Yes.
3. No.

The 'enterprise' related to the sale of a horse I had up from the country for that purpose, and to my thinking was perfectly successful.

The 'letter,' which was to Gibraltar, and sent six weeks ago, has not yet been acknowledged, but this is no proof that it has not arrived.

I have been 'abroad since,' but as it was only to a dinner at Boulogne, perhaps that can hardly be considered as being so in the proper sense.

However, the answers were sufficiently wide of the mark to keep me in any important matter of doubt or judgment from putting too much faith in the counsel of the 'clairvoyante.'

A lady, Miss G—, next attracted my attention. I sent a specimen of my handwriting, and enclosed the requisite amount of postage-stamps—I think thirteen. From her I received by an early post a paper, which I here reproduce. The attributes were printed in German text; the remarks in italics were filled in with writing, as follows:—

'Education—*Basis is good.*

Understanding—*Practical, clear.*

Firmness—*Undecided.*

Temper—*Irritable, but good.*

Benevolence—*Limited.*

Honour, &c.—*The highest attainable.*

Business, &c.—*Talents of a high order.*

Additional Notes—*Great ingenuity of resource.*

With Miss G—'s compliments.'

Altogether, I was not content with my shilling's worth, so I sent out some more specimens of penmanship, sowing my postage-stamps, as it were, like seed to produce a crop of self-knowledge. The first advertisement I saw in my weekly paper promised well, running thus:—

KNOW THYSELF.—Professor B—'s method of Describing the Character of Persons from their Handwriting never fails, being founded on philosophical principles. A specimen of the ordinary writing, stating age, sex, and profession, enclosing thirteen uncut postage stamps, will insure an unerring description of the mental and moral qualities of the writer, pointing out gifts and defects hitherto unsuspected, with their probable influence on the future life; and advice in all cases of distress and difficulty.—Address, Dr B—, &c. &c.

I was less allured by the term 'professor' than by the expanse of his information. For I have known professors whose occupations were not altogether in accordance with the popularly-received importance of the title. One professor last year at Vauxhall tossed two children about in the air with his feet as he lay on his back, and another spun a gilt globe about in the same position. I have known professors teach the polka; make wigs; blow glass birds of paradise; lecture on elocution, and run away without paying the literary institution for the room and lighting; exhibit themselves in white tights as fighting gladiators and

kneeling slaves; stand on their heads on the top of a pole amongst a shower of squibs; present begging-letters; train 'happy families' of cats, birds, mice, and monkeys; make fireworks to any amount, dividing their rank in this respect with 'chevaliers;' compound no end of wonderful quack medicines; in fact achieve every kind of marvellous performance, known or unknown, under the sun. However, Professor B— promised much, and in due time I received this reply to my application:—

'The type of this character is soundness with amenity; earnest stability of mind; a certain decision and rectitude, united to a kindly disposition, and wholly free from formality or harsh precision; liberality of opinions, frankness, and cordiality, with a good understanding.'

After this, it was not long before the announcement of another 'professor' met my eye. Professor E— undertook to convey similar information at the same small sum. I wrote as follows:—'The writer, a gentleman, aged 34, will be glad to know Professor E—'s opinion of his character;' and I enclosed the stamps. The answer I received in a day or two was certainly the best and most carefully-compiled of all. Indeed there was actual evidence of painstaking in its construction. It nearly filled a sheet of note-paper, at the top of which was lithographed a pen, bearing a scroll, on which was inscribed—'A Pen's portrayal of a Pen-stroke's revelations.' I must confess that amongst them all I was beginning to get really confused as to what I was or was not:—

'So characteristic is the calligraphy of this writer, that the graphiologist may with certainty declare it to be that of one whose manners are marked by a careless love of ease: whose thoughts, though often ingenious, happy, and novel, are deficient in accuracy and in well-defined clearness, and whose actions bear the stamp of irregularity and incompleteness: one who has no dominant ambition to give unity to the aimings of the intellect, and whose intentions are too unsettled, undecided, and wanting in plan and arrangement, for persistency of exertion to be developed, or close and quiet application to be a prominent trait in the character.'

'Readiness of talent, in the instance of the present writer, seems prejudicial to the health of the mind; for the ability to succeed in any attempt, and a consciousness of that ability, is productive of so much self-satisfaction, that a disposition to rest is engendered, and action only takes place under the influence of stimuli. Here, indeed, or we are much mistaken, is an applicant whose power of volition has never received equal training to that which has been accorded to the intellectual faculties; whose *Ego* is no despotic monarch; who plays with fortune, rather than fights with her; whom circumstances may for a while render enthusiastic, but who is far too impulsive to be resolute. One whose forethought is not sufficiently preparative, who lets tomorrow come before to-day is finished, and who might become the diamond by concentration, but who, by diffusiveness, approximates more closely to diamond-dust.'

*"Enobarbus. Every time
Serves for the matter that is then born in it.
Lepidus. But small to great matters must give way.
Ene. Not if the small come first."*

'We trace in our applicant a faint reflection of the character of Enobarbus. R. E.'

The last communication of this kind I received was on a printed paper like one of the others, and filled up in writing as I have copied it. It contained, besides, a bill of wonderful preparations for reproducing hair, and dyeing it to any shade in three minutes, absorbing corns and bunions, and scenting handkerchiefs. I should have mentioned that another of the answers contained a puff of more hair dye, and a third an announcement of a book on etiquette. One would think that the majority of inquirers were badly-brought up people with corns and red hair. I subjoin the reply:—

Character—*Truthful, sincere.*
Education—*Very good.*
Temper—*Affectionate, amiable, mild.*

Disposition—*Kind, good-natured.*
Jealousy—*Prominent.*
Benevolence—*Kind, but cautious.*
Honour—*The highest attainable.*
Business Talents—*Fond of novelty, great adaptive talent.*
With Miss D—'s compliments.

There is nothing new in this professorship of graphiology. Years ago Shenstone wrote, 'I wish I could see Mrs Jago's handwriting, that I might judge of her temper.' It is only an old conceit revived, but revived for the purposes of gain. That it pays, is evident from the repeated advertisements of its professors, and the avidity with which three or four adopted the idea after the first speculating individual had started it. It is pleasant in imagination to contemplate the professors in their studies. Do they pass hours in scrutinising every stroke and inflection of the specimen sent—detecting boldness in a pothook, or irresolution in a hanger, calling in the aid of a microscope to investigate still farther the temperament in which the up-and-down strokes were conceived? Or are they reckless individuals, who keep their characters ready written, and use them by chance as they come to hand, like printers of meteorological almanacs with the weather prognostics? I incline to the latter belief.

At the same time, a small experience has taught me to have faith in graphiology—to a certain extent. I receive many letters every day—fifteen or sixteen sometimes—and I can read several before I tear the envelope. When a large one arrives, with four stamps and a delicate address, I know it is from a feeble amateur writer, who adds a note, informing me that he or she 'ventures to send a first effort for my approval, and hopes I will excuse the imperfections,' which I never by any chance do. A letter of the *ancien régime*—that is to say, a sheet of paper folded in the old-fashioned way, without an envelope—directed in a bold, straight, splashy hand, in very black ink, with flourishes, and perhaps wafered, or sealed with one large, simple initial, I know is from a City writer. It either contains a bill, or it is an invitation to lecture at some Trans-Temple literary institution, or it begs an order for any theatre at which I may chance to have a piece playing. I know by the address that it will contain many abbreviations—such as *dr* for *dear*, *wd* for *would*, *grs* *obedly* for *yours obediently*; and that the name of the writer will terminate in a flourish of indefinite length and eccentricity. It is also sure to have my name written at length down in the left-hand corner, for the which, being properly addressed, I cannot well account. There is one careless, hurried hand that I know—I scarcely can tell why—directs a club or whitebait dinner invitation; another, cramped and precise, is sure to herald some request or petition of a hopeless character; a third, written straight up and down, or perhaps with a reversed slope, I am certain will unfold some anonymous abuse of myself, provoked by a recent article or book. Indeed I have become so learned in this species of discrimination, that when I return from my club at night—whereat I chiefly finish my evenings in the society of agreeable and intelligent persons of all positions in life, and from whom I hear the general news of town, in anticipation even of the 'Times'—I can tell at a glance which letters will give me pleasure in reading before I go to bed, and which, if I value an unworried night, I had better leave to be discussed at breakfast and by daylight.

I would not be too hard upon these poor 'professors,' with the exception of 'Henri the Clairvoyante.' The graphiologists may haply believe in their science to a certain extent, and, for aught I know, take some slight degree of pains to concoct an answer; but the 'clairvoyante' must be aware, from the outset, that he is a humbug; that if the knowledge he professes to diffuse were in his grasp, he could very soon enrich himself far more than an advertisement could do, were it only to anticipate the state of the funds. His answer was least worth the shilling of all I applied to.

I have only one more series of disclosures to make;

but I believe these to be the most important, as they refer to a mischievous set of people: I allude to the Turf Prophets, who have risen, like flies in summer, to buzz about us. Their game is absolutely a dangerous one to play at: for feeble minds may, and doubtless do, risk more money on their advice than they can spare if they lose, and thus tumble into the first of a series of social quagmires. I have written to several to know the result of a race at Goodwood—about which, be it understood, I do not care one stable straw—and I am now (July 24) waiting their replies. Long before this sheet is in the reader's hands, it will be decided; and we shall then be enabled to compare the promises of the prophets with the returns of the umpire.

A. S.

INDUSTRIAL GLASGOW IN 1850.

CONDITION OF THE OPERATIVE CLASSES.

FACTS amply sufficient have been adduced to prove beyond all controversy the vast amount and importance of the manufacturing industry carried on in this district. Here we behold a capital of many millions belonging to merchants and manufacturers employed in maintaining a stupendous working-power, whereby many descriptions of raw produce are converted into manufactured articles suitable for every market in the known world; and further than this, supplying the means whereby these goods are conveyed, whether by steam or otherwise, to all parts of the habitable globe—employing in the many branches of business herewith connected at least 100,000 persons directly in factory or other connected occupations, and at least 200,000 more as managers, clerks, porters, &c.—independently of the great numbers engaged in mines and collieries up and down the county of Lanark. So various, indeed, are the many branches of industry here conducted, that there is scarcely any description of labour that can go unemployed or unrewarded; and though the rate of wages at present is not high, scarcely averaging more than 18s. a week, yet with the present prices of necessaries there is no occasion for the industrious artisan, in whatever trade, to suffer want, if he only devote himself honestly, and with perseverance, to his allotted employment, and cultivate habits of frugality, sobriety, and self-respect.

Independently, however, of mere ordinary artisan-labour, there are many kinds of business which afford ample scope for a more than usual exercise of constructive, mechanical skill; and wherever this is the case, the superior workman is sure to find the due reward of his abilities in advanced wages and a station correspondingly elevated above that of his fellows in the same line of occupation. Indeed it is to this superior mechanical aptitude, directed by undeviating and persevering diligence, that many of the leading manufacturers, now wielding a large capital, and employing some hundreds of hands, owed their first rise from the ranks of their fellow-workmen; nor would it be difficult to single out persons in Glasgow now in the enjoyment of wealth, and largely engaged in its manufactures and commerce, who have wrought in their youth at the loom, the mill, or the anvil. In fact throughout Great Britain the upper ranks are constantly recruited from the middle and industrial classes; nor is any public position of honour or influence closed against them, when they have once obtained the confidence and respect of their fellow-countrymen. Now, though it may be quite true that in some few cases these advances have been due to some happy invention, some alteration of fabric caused by the fickleness of fashion, or some fortunate venture in trade, yet in by far the majority of instances they have been the result of steady, long-continued industry and sterling

integrity while in the employment of others. Indeed capital, without which no business whatever can be conducted, is generally the result of accumulated savings, aided and supplemented in some cases by the confidence placed by others, engendered by a longer career of untiring activity, upright conduct, and sterling principle. Without the cultivation of these habits, no permanent advance has ever been made from a subordinate station to one of wealth, influence, and independence: nor will the same causes that have already produced such happy results cease to operate wherever the legitimate means are employed. It would be well if the Glasgow operatives would reflect deeply on this subject, and see how far they in particular are employing the right means towards so desirable an end.

Even at the time that we are now writing, there is a numerous class of persons in and around Glasgow who, although still occupying subordinate posts, have already advanced onwards from comparatively low and ill-paid stations to others involving confidence and responsibility—such as overlookers, foremen, and managers, all of whom must, as a matter of necessity, be practically versed in every branch of business which they superintend. These are not merely clever mechanicians, and apt in business, but possessed of decided general abilities and well-regulated industrious habits, men perhaps with slender education originally, but who have seen the value of scientific knowledge, and procured in their hours of leisure that instruction which has aided them most essentially in their onward career. Glasgow affords many opportunities for such self-improvement in its Mechanics' Institutes and libraries; and these, or such as these, are the persons who avail themselves of them, using life well, and constantly rising in the social scale. They work silently, but surely, acquiring the confidence and respect of those around them; and instances are not wanting of persons in this class who are laying by considerable savings, to be employed either by themselves or with others in an independent venture. And let us look at the homes of these persons. Their own character being reflected in their families, their houses are in most cases clean, wholesome, well provided with domestic comforts, and furnished in a style which might equally suit the classes above them. It may happen also that some members of their families add their own wages to those of the parent; and thus, as all combine to promote mutual comfort, with a strict regard to a frugal economy, savings gradually accrue, which will hereafter lead to still further prosperity and final independence. In illustration of this statement, the writer of these observations may cite two cases of which he has personal knowledge. The first of these began life as a draw-boy to a harness-loom weaver, from which humble capacity he soon rose to be a shawl-weaver himself. He had a natural taste for pattern-scheming, combined with a certain mechanical aptitude, which he soon got the means of improving by instruction in leisure hours procured by savings from his wages, at that time higher than the present amount of competition allows. By dint of constant application and repeated experiments, he succeeded in introducing various improvements and plans for shortening the labour and increasing the pattern-working powers of the loom. These indications of manufacturing talent soon introduced him to a higher class of business, and by constant attention to these pursuits, he at length won the confidence of the principal shawl-manufacturers of the district. The post of manufacturing master in a large establishment became vacant; and he was chosen to fill it at a salary which at once placed him in comfort and independence. He is now the manager of one of the largest Thibet-shawl establishments in Lanarkshire, with a salary that enables him to live in gentility; and he has amassed, besides, a considerable sum of money, which he turns to advantage in trade. He has a son and daughter also, the former of whom holds a responsible charge in a Thibet-wool mill, while the latter

superintends the sewing and dressing of the higher classes of India-pattern shawl-pieces. The family are still young, and it is not too much to anticipate that the poor draw-boy may very long become a wealthy and influential manufacturer, giving employment to others instead of taking it himself. The second case that has fallen under our notice is that of a most worthy and talented man, who rose from being a heavy-forger to be a boiler-maker and fitter, and thence upwards by a native engineering genius, which has guided him, as it were, by instinct, to a practical acquaintance with every branch of the marine-engine business. His knowledge is of a most extensively-varied nature, and of ready application; but being a pure self-taught child of nature, he is far better fitted to superintend the practical working of the manufacture than to explain the abstract principles on which it depends. He is invaluable to his employers; and with all his roughness, he is a man of sterling worth and firm integrity, having the charge of every department, and the direction of every process, great or small, in one of the largest engine factories of Glasgow, at a very liberal salary far beyond his expenditure.

But to go a step lower—we have the knowledge of many factory operatives who, with their families, cannot earn more than 32s. or 34s. a week at the present rate of wages; and yet, by dint of strict economy, they contrive to maintain themselves comfortably with every appearance of external respectability and even gentility, occupying houses of small size, indeed, but clean, tidy, and well-provided with all the means of domestic comfort; and notwithstanding all this, putting by small sums regularly to save them in time of sickness or slack employment. The secret of all this is simply as follows: they waste none of their hard earnings in foolish or profligate expenditure, but put it to a right and legitimate use—for the improvement of their homes, and the maintenance of their personal respectability. Such as these, too, fail not eventually to rise in the social scale. They may not, it is true, possess the abilities of the highest class of operatives, but still they possess that studious attention to business, and that firm integrity of conduct, which is sure, sooner or later, to open to them positions of trust and responsibility, if not those of a higher class that lead to permanent independence.

Now, as this comfort and positive happiness is at the command of ordinary working-men, who will set about seeking it with rectitude of purpose—and such labour, honestly persevered in, has a direct tendency to raise these men in the social scale—there appears no reason whatever for those expressions of horror and pity which are so thoughtlessly indulged in with respect to factory-labour, nor for the loud denunciations which, either by mistake or deep-designing purpose, are uttered against the manufacturing employers. The working-man gives his services for a stipulated amount of weekly wages, subject to fluctuations regulated by demand; and if he performs his duties conscientiously, and with diligence, maintaining his character and self-respect, he is as much an object of esteem in his own sphere as the employer himself; for labour is neither dishonourable nor a hindrance to happiness, disgrace and misery being the consequence not of the use, but of the abuses of the rewards of labour. That the factory operatives, too, are in many cases considerably well-informed on general topics, may be easily found in conversation; for they not unfrequently exhibit a degree of intelligence and acuteness, clearly indicating a considerable amount of mental discipline and reasoning power, as well as acquaintance with positive facts. Habits such as these elevate of themselves even the poorest operatives; for while they in noway interfere with, but rather promote their efficiency in hours of toil, they render them a blessing to their families, and an object of respect to all within the sphere of their influence. Superadded to these a profound sense of moral responsibility, based on religious obligation, which, we know, many actually do

possess, and we have all the elements of real happiness that may be the lot of all, and are enjoyed by many who are still contentedly working in the humble but useful capacity of factory artisans.

Melancholy facts, however, are so constantly forcing themselves on the attention of persons even slenderly acquainted with the condition of the operative classes in Glasgow, that we dare not conceal the truth, painful as it unquestionably is. Vast numbers—we fear fully one-half of these artisans—are in constant poverty, and plunged in debt, even when in full employment; having no thought for the morrow, but spending a large portion of their hard earnings with improvident profusion on indulgences wholly unnecessary and injurious—constantly uttering invectives and bitter reproaches against their employers, and their low scale of remuneration, instead of blaming their own habits, which act as a constant bar to their progress and improvement. As for saving money in brisk seasons of employment, this is a notion that they cannot entertain; and as soon as the demands of the labour-market diminish, and work once more becomes slack, or ceases for a time, they are thrown at once into helpless indigence, and compelled to seek charity or parish relief. This is the case with the improvident of every grade among the operatives; but more so perhaps among those who, being good workmen, receive higher wages, than among those who follow lower and worse-paid employments. Facts quite well known in Glasgow, as well as in the factory towns of England, fully bear out this assertion. With all the advantages of high wages due to their superior craftsmanship, vast numbers of them are, notwithstanding, every whit as poor, and perhaps poorer, than those of very inferior abilities. Their superior wages, indeed, do them harm rather than good, for they have the more to spend in beastly self-indulgence and profligate enjoyment. Their week's earnings are half spent in a single night, and the rest of the week they are compelled to pass in a state of half starvation, surrounded by a squalid hungry family, in a home destitute of every comfort and most of the common necessities of life. The example of the father is too readily followed by his wife and children: use soon familiarises them to their degradation, and all of them speedily lose every sense of self-respect or care for appearances. This is the opposite side of the picture, and a very painful one; but it reflects no discredit on the factory system itself, being only the natural consequence of abusing instead of legitimately employing the wages of labour. We incline also to think that this unhappy mode of life is incidental, in Glasgow at least, far less to persons directly engaged in mills than to those employed in the metallic trades, or who work for small masters in the dyeing and other numerous branches dependent on the factories.

The cause of all this misery, which of course varies in degree according to the amount of self-indulgence, is, in one word, improvidence, which shows itself especially in two particulars, that somehow or other are generally found in close connection—a propensity for intoxicating drinks, and an ignorance or neglect of domestic economy.

Drunkenness, indeed, prevails to a more lamentable extent in and about Glasgow than in almost any other portion of Great Britain; and the amount of misery and impoverishment caused by such indulgence is sufficiently apparent from the fact, that the operative classes of that city squander in intoxicating drinks upwards of a million of money per annum, which, if put to a proper purpose, would maintain themselves and their families in respectability, placing them above all fear of actual want, and enabling them to live in comfortable homes, surrounded by thriving families, and entitled to general respect. Instead of this, we see these improvident, reckless workmen seeking refuge in pent-up unwholesome wynds and closes, to which they are content to resort that they may have the more to spend on illicit pleasure, which

consumes the larger portion of their wages. Indulgence in drink is almost always accompanied with other excesses and extravagances, such as treating, gambling, &c. A few shillings perhaps remain to pay off an instalment of debt at the provision shop, or to take out of pawn a few necessary articles to keep up appearances on Sunday; and after food has been purchased, sufficient for a day or two's consumption, nothing more remains. Clothes, and even furniture, are hurried to the pawn-office, in order to supply the place of the wages squandered at the spirit shops; the petty provision-dealer is once more resorted to for credit, which adds to a debt already beyond all probability of liquidation; or, if credit be gone, a great portion of the week is necessarily spent in want and penury. The example of the workman, too, gradually infects his family; for a drunken husband soon makes a drunken wife; and where the children are in the receipt of mill wages, the example of the parents so infects these also, that even in early years they become more or less the victims of the same degrading propensity. Such a state of things never lasts very long; for the habit once formed, speedily strengthens, all regard for appearances is soon lost in the absorbing love of drink, and constant altercations at home extinguish every chance of domestic felicity. Debts accumulate in various quarters, which at length become so pressing, that the assistance of friends must be called in to relieve them of a portion of their load; or else their wages are arrested, to the utter and irredeemable loss of their character with the employer. The experience of every one who has been in the habit of mixing with the operative classes will bear testimony to the truth of this sad picture, which, though one of an extreme case, but too truly describes the poor artisan's road to ruin. And yet these very men have the same chance, with perhaps a greater ability, for insuring their own comfort and respectability, as those better-principled persons who, living at home with their families, enjoy every domestic comfort for the present, with means in store for soothing the pains of sickness, or providing against the privations incidental to fluctuations of trade.

It is said that drunkenness has been on the decrease in Glasgow for the last two or three years; and considering the rapid increase of the population, we are inclined to think that this is to some extent true. Any such diminution, so far as it goes, is the lessening of an intolerable evil; but there yet remains sufficient of it, revoltingly perceptible, too, by even the most superficial observer, to be a foul blot on the population of Glasgow, and a source of lasting misery and pauperism to some thousands of innocent persons, who are unwilling victims to the profligate habits of their lawful protectors and supporters.

Closely connected with intemperance is the ignorance or neglect of domestic economy, which is so striking in the homes of many of the operative classes, that no person in the habit of visiting them can fail to observe it, and lament its baneful consequences. This results in some measure from intermarriages formed by persons engaged in the mills; for few of the females so employed receive that kind of domestic training likely to suit them for becoming useful and thrifty mothers of families. It were well for the workman to consider how much of his future comforts are dependent on the character of his partner in life. A wife who has method and love of order, combined with a fair knowledge of plain domestic economy, is an invaluable blessing, and will keep him from many a temptation from without. Nor is her task difficult, exacting her undivided time, for a very moderate amount of care and attention to cleanliness would, with inconceivably little trouble, render her husband's humble room or house both clean and orderly. His meals would be ready for him, without bustle or hurry at each return from his place of work; and his partner would at the same time (even with children to care for besides) have opportunities during the day for needle-work, or other employment that would at any

rate supply the family wants, if not procure a small amount of money-payment to swell the family earnings. Alas! how many instances are there, on the contrary, in which the wife is constantly at home, or, what is worse, gossiping in her neighbour's room—a slattern in attire, with children even dirtier than herself, everything around her in disorder and filth, procrastinating every household duty till too late for its performance, and seldom prepared to administer to her husband's requirements; and this, too, when he is in the receipt of wages amply sufficient to entitle him to every reasonable domestic comfort. Little wonder, then, if grumbings and mutual recriminations be heard, and home at length be shunned, as presenting no attraction for him who provides it. The result in a vast number of cases is, that the unhappy man seeks a false consolation in the beer-shop or spirit-store, where he can obtain a brief snatch of quiet and so-called enjoyment.

Another and no trifling error of well-meaning but injudicious and short-sighted economists, is the too frequent habit of purchasing provisions in small quantities on credit at petty retail-shops, instead of laying in at the time of weekly or fortnightly payment a sufficient stock for use of the principal articles required, which they could purchase for ready money at a far lower rate—at least 10 per cent. less—in the markets or shops of large dealers. By this plan they would not only save money, and avoid all temptation to petty debts, but would be provided with a superior article of consumption. The saving, indeed, thus effected throughout the year, would of itself constitute a sum by no means trifling, to be laid out in useful clothing, or put by for a time of greater need. Such acts of economy as these, though seemingly unimportant, form a leading element of well-directed household management.

A third feature of improvidence in the operative classes, and which is productive of a long train of evils and distresses, is the too general practice of engaging in early and inconsiderate marriages. It is not unfrequently the case that youths, scarcely out of their apprenticeship, and only just arrived at man's estate, entangle themselves at the very outset of life with a wife and all the consequences of marriage, even at a time when their wages are barely sufficient for the respectable maintenance of themselves. Seldom, indeed, have they any savings wherewith to establish themselves in comfort, and much less frequently do they get any supplies for that purpose from those whom they have selected for their partners—young girls, probably as ignorant and inexperienced as themselves. A family speedily follows; and many a deserving workman finds himself saddled with anxious cares and a heavy burthen long ere he has power to bear them. Honourable feelings and just views of the marriage obligations are the only preventives for such an evil. To rush headlong into a state involving such heavy responsibilities is an act of downright cruelty to the confiding female whom he plunges in ruin, and surrounds with a family that he cannot support. The operative classes should reflect long and maturely on this matter, and instil right views on so important a subject into the minds of their growing children, and all other young persons who come within their influence. Marriage is a proper institution if rightly considered, and only entered into from right motives and with proper prudence: it will then in all probability greatly conduce to happiness and mutual comfort; but early and imprudent marriages are only the commencement of a train of evils and miseries that will end only with life itself. Let the industrious artisan, then, think well beforehand how far he is prepared for the burthen by prudent savings of former earnings, and consider maturely the character of the female whom he has chosen for his partner, before he involves both her and himself in obligations which should never be entered into without serious reflections on his and her powers of fulfilling them. Those in the middle class just above him exercise this prudence as a body to a remarkable extent, and there can be no

reason why the artisans of Clydesdale should not to a far greater degree than at present act with cautious discretion and forethought when contemplating an obligation so fraught with good or evil as marriage, which can never be dissolved except by death.

FORTUNES OF THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER.

BETWEEN Passy and Auteuil were still to be seen, some few years ago, the remains of what had been a gentleman's residence. The residence and the family to whom it had belonged had both fallen during the first Revolution. The bole of a once magnificent tree, stag-headed, owing to the neighbouring buildings having hurt the roots, was all the evidence that remained of a park; but bits of old moss-grown wall—broken steps that led to nothing—heads and headless trunks of statues that once adorned the edges of what, now a marsh, had formerly been a piece of ornamental water—little thickets of stunted trees stopped in their growth by want of care—all hinted of what had been, although they could give no idea of the beauty which had once made Bouloinvilliers the pride of the neighbourhood and its possessor. Such was the aspect of the place recently; but when the following anecdote begins, France was to external appearance prosperous, and Bouloinvilliers was still in its bloom.

At a cottage within the gate which entered the grounds lived the gardener and his wife. They had been long married, had lost all their children, and were considered by everybody a staid elderly couple, when, to the astonishment of all, a girl was born. This precious plant, the child of their old age, was the delight especially of Pierre's life: he breathed but in little Marie, and tended her with the utmost care. Although attired in the costume appropriate to her station, her clothes were of fine materials; every indulgence in their power was lavished upon her, and every wish gratified, except the very natural one of going outside the grounds—that was never permitted to her whom they had dedicated to the blessed Virgin, and determined to keep 'unspotted from the world.' Pierre himself taught her to read very well, and to write a little; Cécillon to knit, sew, and prepare the *pot-au-feu*; and amusement she easily found for herself. She lived among green leaves and blossoms: she loved them as sisters: all her thoughts turned towards the flowers that surrounded her on every side; they were her sole companions, and she never wearied playing with them. An old lime, the branches of which drooped round like a tent, and where the bees sought honey as long as there was any lingering on its sweetly-odorous branches, was her house, as she termed it; a large acorn formed a coffee-pot; its cups, her cups, plates, porringers, and saucers, according to their size and flatness; and bits of broken porcelain, rubbed bright, enlivened the knotted stump, which served for shelves, chimney, and all; a water-lily was her *marmite*; fir-cones her cows; a large mushroom her table, when mushrooms were in season, at other times a bit of wood covered with green moss or wild sorrel. Her dolls even were made of flowers—bunches of lilies and roses formed the faces, a bundle of long beech-sprigs the bodies; and for hours would she sit rocking them, her low song chiming in with the drowsy hum of the insects.

When grown older, and become more adventurous, she used to weave little boats from rushes upon bits of cork, and freight them with flowers. These she launched on the lake, where the fresh air and fresh water kept them sometimes longer from fading than would have otherwise been their fate, during the hot dry days of July and August, on their native beds. Thus passed her happy childhood: often and often she dreamed over it in after-life, pleasing herself with the fancy, that perhaps as God, when he made sinless man in his own image, gave him a garden as his home, so for those who entered into 'the joy of our Lord' a garden

might be prepared in heaven, sweeter far than even that of Bouloinvilliers—one where sun never scorched, cold never pinched, flowers never faded, birds never died. The death of a bird was the greatest grief she had known, a cat the most ferocious animal she had as yet encountered. She attended the private chapel on Sundays and saints' days. The day she made her first communion was the first of her entry into the world, and much distraction of mind did the unwonted sight of houses, shops, and crowds of people, cause to our little recluse, which served for reflection, conversation, and curious questioning for many a day after. On a white-painted table with a drawer there stood a plaster-cast of the Virgin Mary, much admired by its innocent namesake, and associated in her mind with praises and sugar-plums—for whenever she had been particularly good she found some there for her. It was her office to dust it with a feather brush, supply water to the flowers amid which the little figure stood, and replace them with fresh ones when faded. Whenever she was petulant, a black screen was placed before the table, and Marie was not suffered to approach it. This was her only punishment; indeed the only one she required, for she heard and saw nothing wrong: her parents never disputed, and they were so gentle and indulgent to her, that she never even felt tempted to disguise the truth. The old priest often represented to the father that unless he intended his child for the cloister, this mode of bringing her up in such total seclusion and ignorance was almost cruel; but Pierre answered that he could give her a good fortune, and would take care to secure a good husband for her; and her perfect purity and innocence were so beautiful, that the kind-hearted but unwise ecclesiastic did not insist farther.

In the meantime she grew apace; and her mother being dead, Marie lived on as before with her father, whose affection only increased with his years, both of them apparently thinking that the world went on as they did themselves, unchanged in a single idea. Alas! 'we know not what a day may bring forth,' even when we have an opportunity of seeing and hearing all that passes around us. Pierre and Marie were scarcely aware of the commencement of the Revolution until it was at its height—the marquis, his son, and the good priest massacred—madame escaped to England—and the property divided, and in the possession of others of a very different stamp from his late kind patron, a model of suavity and grace of manner even in that capital which gave laws of politeness to the rest of Europe. All this came like a clap of thunder upon the astonished Pierre; and although he continued to live in his old cottage, he never more held up his head. Finally he became quite childish, and one day died sitting in his chair, his last words being 'Marie,' his last action pointing to the little figure of the Virgin. When his death, however, became known, the new propriétaire desired that the cottage should be vacated, and came himself to look after its capabilities. He was astonished at the innocent beauty of the youthful Marie, but not softened by it; for his bold, coarse admiration, and loud, insolent manner, so terrified the gentle recluse, that as soon as it was dark she made a bundle of her clothes, and taking the cherished little earthen image in her hand, went forth, like Eve from paradise, though, alas! not into a world without inhabitants. Terrified to a degree which no one not brought up as she had been can form the least idea of, but resolved to dare anything rather than meet that bold, bad man again, she plunged into the increasing gloom, and wandered, wearied and heartbroken, she knew not whither, until, hungry and tired, she could go no farther. She lay down, therefore, at the foot of a tree, with her head on her bundle, and the Virgin in her hand, and soon fell sound asleep.

She was awakened from a dream of former days by rough hands, and upon regaining her recollection, found that some one had snatched the bundle from beneath

her head, and that nothing remained to her but the little image, associated in her mind with that happy childhood to which her present destitute and friendless condition formed so terrible a contrast. The sneers, and in some cases the insults of the passers-by, terrified her to such a degree, that, regardless of consequences, she penetrated further into the Bois de Boulogne, when at length weak, and indeed quite exhausted from want of food, she sank down, praying to God to let her die, and take her to Heaven. She waited patiently for some time, hoping, and more than half expecting, that what she asked so earnestly would be granted to her. About an hour passed, and Marie, wondering in her simple faith that she was still alive, repeated her supplications, uttering them in her distraction in a loud tone of voice. Suddenly she fancied she heard sounds of branches breaking, and the approach of footsteps, and filled with the utmost alarm lest it might be some of those much-dreaded men who had derided and insulted her, she attempted to rise and fly; but her weakness was so great, that after a few steps she fell.

'My poor girl,' said a kind voice, 'are you ill? What do you here, so far from your home and friends?'

'I have no home, no friend but God, and I want to go to Him. Oh, my God, let me die! let me die!'

'You are too young to die yet: you have many happy days in store I hope. Come, come; eat something, or you will die.'

'But eating will make me live, and I want to die, and go to my father and mother.'

'But that would be to kill yourself, and then you would never see either God or your parents, you know. Come, eat a morsel, and take a mouthful of wine.'

'But when you go, there is no one to give me any more, so I shall only be longer in dying.'

'Self-destruction, you ought to know, if you have been properly brought up, is the only sin for which there can be no pardon, for that is the only sin we cannot repent.'

Marie looked timidly up at the manly, sensible, kind face which bent over her, and accepted the food he offered. He was dressed as a workman, and had on his shoulders a hod of glass: in fact he was an itinerant glazier. His look was compassionate, but his voice, although soft, was authoritative. Refreshed by what she had taken, Marie sat up, and very soon was able to walk. She told her little history, one word of which he never doubted.

'But what do you mean to do?' asked the young man.

'To stay with you always, for you are kind and good, and no one else is so to me.'

'But that cannot be: it would not be right, you know.'

'And why would it not be right? Oh, do let me! don't send me away! I will be so good!' answered she, her entire ignorance and innocence preventing her feeling what any girl, brought up amongst her fellow-creatures however carefully, would at once have done.

Auguste was a Belgian, without any relations at Paris, and with little means of supporting a wife; but young, romantic, and kind-hearted, he resolved at once to marry his innocent protégée, as soon at least as he could find a priest to perform the ceremony—no easy task at that time, and in the eyes of the then world of Paris no necessary one, for profligacy was at its height, and the streets were yet red with the blood of the virtuous and noble. They began life, then, with his load of glass and her gold cross and gold earrings, heirlooms of considerable value, which providentially the robbers had not thought of taking from her. With the produce of the earrings they hired a garret and some humble furniture, where they lived from hand to mouth, Marie taking in coarse sewing, and her husband sometimes picking up a few sous at his trade. Often, however, they had but one meal a day, seldom any fire; and when their first child was born, their troubles of course materially increased, and Auguste often returned from a weary ramble all over Paris just as he had set out—with-

out having even gained a solitary sou. The cross soon followed the earrings, and they had now nothing left that they could part with except the little plaster figure so often alluded to, which would not bring a franc, and which was loved and cherished by Marie as the sole remaining object connected with Bouloin-villiers, and the last thing her father had looked at on earth. The idea of parting with this gave her grief which is better imagined than described; for although the furniture of the cottage undoubtedly belonged to Marie, her husband knew too well that at a time when might was right, any steps taken towards recovering its value would be not only fruitless, but dangerous: he therefore never even attempted to assert their rights.

One day, however, they had been without food or firing for nearly twenty-four hours, and the little Cécile was fractious with hunger, incessantly crying 'Du pain! du pain!' Marie rose, and approaching the Virgin, said—'It is wicked to hesitate longer: go, Auguste, and sell it for what you can get.'

She seized it hastily, as though afraid of changing her resolution, and with such trepidation, that it slipped through her fingers, and broke in two. Poor Marie sank upon her face at this sight, with a superstitious feeling that she had meditated wrong, and was thus punished. She was weeping bitterly, when her husband almost roughly raised her up, exclaiming in joyful accents—'Marie, Marie, give thanks to God! Now I know why your father pointed when he could not speak! Sorrow no more: we are rich!'

In the body of the statuette was found bills to the amount of fifteen hundred francs—Marie's fortune, in fact, which her father had told the chaplain he had amassed for her. We need not dwell upon the happiness of this excellent couple, or the rapture, mingled with gratitude, in which the remainder of this day was passed. Those who disapprove of castle-building may perhaps blame them; for several castles they constructed, on better foundations, however, than most of those who spend their time in this pleasing but unprofitable occupation. Next day they took a glazier's shop, stocked it, provided themselves with decent clothing and furniture, and commenced their new life with equal frugality and comfort—Marie doing her own work, and serving in the shop when her husband was out engaged in his business. But in time he was able to hire an assistant, and she a young girl, to look after the children while she pursued the avocation of a *couturière*, in which she soon became very expert. The little image was fastened together again, placed upon a white table, similar to that which used to stand in her childhood's home, surrounded with flowers, and made, as of old, the abode of sugar-plums and rewards of good conduct. But alas! there are not many Mariés in the world. In spite of her good example and good teaching, her children would at times be naughty. They sometimes quarrelled, sometimes were greedy; and what vexed their simple-minded mother more than all the rest, sometimes told stories of one another. Still they were good children, as children go; and when the black screen was superseded by punishments a little more severe, did credit to their training. They were not permitted to play in the street, or to go to or from school alone, or remain there after school-hours. Their father took pains with their deportment, corrected false grammar, and recommended the cultivation of habits more refined than people in his humble although respectable position deem necessary. As their prosperity increased, Marie was surprised to observe her husband devote all his spare time to reading, and not only picture-cleaning and repairing, but painting, in which he was such an adept, that he was employed to paint several signs.

'How did you learn so much?' she said one day. 'Did your father teach you?'

'No; I went to school.'

'Then he was not so very poor?'

'He was very poor, but he lived in hopes that I might one day possess a fortune.'

'It would seem as if he had a foreknowledge of what my little statue contained?'

'No, my love; he looked to it from another source; for a title without a fortune is a misfortune.'

'A title! Nay, now you are playing with my simplicity.'

'No, Marie; I am the nephew of the Vicomte de —, and for aught I know, may be the possessor of that name at this moment—the legal heir to his estate. My father, ruined by his extravagance, and, I grieve to add, by his crimes, had caused himself to be disowned by all his relations. He fled with me to Paris, where he soon after died, leaving me nothing but his seal and his papers. I wrote to my uncle for assistance; but although being then quite a boy, and incapable of having personally given him offence, he refused it in the most cruel manner; and I was left to my own resources at a time when my name and education were rather a hindrance than a help, and I found no opening for entering into any employment suited to my birth. My uncle had then two fine, healthy, handsome boys; the youngest is dead; and the eldest, I heard accidentally, in such a state of health that recovery is not looked for by the most sanguine of his friends. I never breathed a word of all this to you, because I never expected to survive my cousins, and resolved to make an independent position for myself sooner or later. Do you remember the other day an old gentleman stopping and asking some questions about the coat of arms I was painting?'

'Yes; he asked who had employed you to paint those arms, but I was unable to inform him.'

'Well, my dear, he came again this morning to repeat the question to myself; and I am now going to satisfy him, when I expect to bring you some news.'

Marie was in a dream. Unlike gardeners' daughters of the present day, she had read no novels or romances, and it appeared to her as impossible that such an event should happen as that the cap on her head should turn into a crown. It *did* happen, however. The old gentleman, a distant relation and intimate friend of the uncle of Auguste, had come to Paris, at his dying request, to endeavour to find out his nephew and heir; and the proofs Auguste produced were so plain, that he found no difficulty in persuading M. B.—de that he was the person he represented himself to be. He very soon after went to Belgium, took legal possession of all his rights, and returned to hail the gentle and long-suffering Marie as Vicomtesse de —, and conduct her and the children to a handsome apartment in the Rue —, dressed in habiliments suitable to her present station, and looking as lady-like as if she had been born to fill it. She lived long and happily, and continued the same pure, humble-minded being she had ever been, whether blooming among the flowers at Bouloinvilliers, or pining for want in a garret in the Faubourg St Antoine. Two of her daughters are alive now. Her son, after succeeding to his father, died without children of the cholera in 1832; and the son of his eldest sister has taken up the *title*, under a different name, these matters not being very strictly looked after in France.

THE VICTORIA REGIA.

SUCH is the royal name which botanists have consented to bestow on the most extraordinary perhaps of all floral productions—the great water-lily of South America; the magnificence and splendour of whose blossoms far outstrip those of the more gigantic but less highly-organized flower of Sumatra (*Rafflesia Arnoldi*), at one time considered the greatest prodigy of the vegetable kingdom.

This queen of aquatics, so conspicuous in the lagoons of those immense rivers tributary to the Amazon, must have been long familiar to the native Indians, and indeed the mealy seeds contained in its fruit are

in favour with them as an article of food; but we believe that Hænke, the famous but unfortunate botanical traveller, was the first European botanist to meet with this vegetable wonder. It was during his South American travels in 1801 that he made the discovery; and so beautiful and extraordinary did the plant appear, that, in a transport of admiration, he fell upon his knees, and fervently expressed aloud his sense of the power and magnificence of the Creator in His works! The botanist and his companion encamped on the river's bank near to the place where the lily grew, for the express purpose of enjoying the splendid spectacle which it formed, and we are told that they quitted the spot with great reluctance. Professor Lindley says, 'An undoubted addition to a tribe of plants, at once so beautiful and so circumscribed as that of the *Nympha* or water-lilies, would be an event of interest even if it only related to a distinctly-marked species of some well-known genus. But when the subject of the discovery is not only a new genus, but a plant of the most extraordinary beauty—fragrant, and of dimensions previously unheard-of in the whole vegetable kingdom, except in the colossal family of palms—an interest must then attach to it which can rarely be possessed by a novelty in natural history. Such a plant is the subject of the following notice—a water-lily, exhibiting a new type of structure, of the most noble aspect, of the richest colours, and so gigantic, that its leaves measure above eighteen feet, and its flower nearly four feet in circumference.*

Notwithstanding this water-lily having been discovered by Hænke in 1801, and subsequently observed by various botanical travellers, it was not before the year 1837 that any full detail of its history appeared, when Dr Lindley prepared an illustrated memoir, of which only twenty-five copies were printed. Even the earliest mention of the plant in print was in 1832, in 'Froiep's Notizen,' wherein it is described as a new species of *Euryale*, under the name of *E. Amazonica*.†

Sir Robert Schomburgk, when investigating the natural productions of British Guiana in the year 1837, discovered the Victoria Lily there, and he gives a glowing detail of the discovery in a letter addressed to the Royal Geographical Society of London, on whose account, aided by the British government, his travels were undertaken. He writes, 'It was on the 1st of January 1837, while contending with the difficulties that nature interposed in different forms, to stem our progress up the river Berbice (lat. 4° 30' N., long. 52° W.), that we arrived at a part where the river expanded and formed a currentless basin. Some object on the southern extremity of this basin attracted my attention, and I was unable to form an idea of what it could be; but, animating the crew to increase the rate of their paddling, we soon came opposite the object which had raised my curiosity, and, behold, a vegetable wonder! All calamities were forgotten; I was a botanist, and felt myself rewarded! There were gigantic leaves, five to six feet across, flat, with a broad rim, lighter green above, and vivid crimson below, floating upon the water; while, in character with the wonderful foliage, I saw luxuriant flowers, each consisting of numerous petals, passing, in alternate tints, from pure white to rose and pink. The smooth water was covered with the blossoms, and as I rowed from one to the other, I always found something new to ad-

* Botanical Register Misc., 1836, p. 9.

† Hooker's Description of Victoria Regia, p. 2.

pire. The flower-stalk is an inch thick near the calyx, and studded with elastic prickles, about three-quarters of an inch long. When expanded, the four-lobed calyx measures a foot in diameter, but is concealed by the expansion of the hundred-petalled corolla. This beautiful flower, when it first unfolds, is white, with a pink centre; the colour spreads as the bloom increases in age, and, at a day old, the whole is rose-coloured. As if to add to the charm of this noble water-lily, it diffuses a sweet scent. As in the case of others in the same tribe, the petals and stamens pass gradually into each other, and many petaloid leaves may be observed bearing vestiges of an anther. The seeds are numerous, and imbedded in a spongy substance. Ascending the river, we found this plant frequently; and the higher we advanced, the more gigantic did the specimens become; one leaf we measured was 6 feet 5 inches in diameter, the rim 5½ inches high, and the flowers 1½ foot across. A beetle (*Trichius* sp.?) infests the flowers to their great injury, often completely destroying the inner part of the disc: we counted sometimes from twenty to thirty of these insects in one flower. The circumstance mentioned by Sir Robert, that the farther up the river he proceeded the larger were the specimens, is a good illustration in nature of the fact now well known to cultivators of the Victoria in this country—that it will not succeed in an atmosphere within the influence of the sea-breeze, nor in water containing salt.

From the researches of the various travellers who have met with it, the great water-lily would seem to have a geographical range of considerable extent—a fact which the geographic botanist would not be led to suppose from its extraordinary structure. It abounds in the lagoons and still shallow bays which occur on all those great rivers tributary to the Amazon, often covering the waters with its gigantic foliage and magnificent flowers to the extent of many miles, its large boat-shaped leaves forming a resting-place for the numerous tribes of aquatic birds that frequent those humid regions. It has likewise been observed to occur in profusion in similar situations on the still waters of the La Plata and the Essequibo, appearing on the latter at a distance of not more than a hundred miles from the sea; and from the fact of so little being known of the botanical productions more especially of the interior of South America, it is probable that the Victoria may yet be found to be very generally distributed over at least the eastern portion of the continent.

When the great American water-lily became known in Europe, a strong desire to obtain its introduction to this country in a living state soon evinced itself. Frequent attempts were made, and long made unsuccessfully, to get fresh seeds and roots transported across the Atlantic. It was not merely the difficulty of obtaining the living plants and seeds which stood in the way: our cultivators were in a great measure ignorant of the natural conditions under which it was developed in its native waters, and even after plants were successfully raised in the Royal Gardens at Kew, they perished without producing flowers or fruit. Many, indeed, are the disappointments and delays of science, as Hooker well exclaims when detailing the history of this royal lily.

At length, after a series of futile attempts, which will form an interesting chapter in the history of botanical science, and an instructive one for the botanists of future times, the queen of all the lilies was successfully introduced into the Exotic Aquarium at Kew. A number of healthy plants being raised, they were last year distributed to the various horticultural establishments in Britain where proper accommodation could be given to the enormous aquatic. One of these plants was sent to the gardens at Chatsworth, the seat of the Duke of Devonshire; and on the 1st November 1849 a flower appeared, indicating a condition of advancement beyond what had been attained by any of the other plants at Kew or elsewhere. On

the evening of Thursday, the 8th of the same month, between five and eight o'clock, this flower partially opened: it closed during sunlight on Friday the 9th, and fully opened on the same evening between five and eight o'clock. On the morning of Saturday the flower was beginning to wither, evincing that rapidity of development and decay which scientific travellers had observed of the lily in its native lakes. Professor Lindley thus describes the splendid blossom:—'The flower itself, when it first opens, resembles the white water-lily, of a dazzling white, with its fine leathery petals, forming a goblet of the most elegant proportions; but as the day advances it gradually expands till it becomes nearly flat; towards evening a faint blush becomes visible in the centre, the petals fall back more and more, and at last, about six o'clock, a sudden change occurs; in a few minutes the petals arrange themselves in the form of a snow-white hemisphere, whose edge reposes on the water, and the centre rises majestically at the summit, producing a diadem of rosy points. It then . . . constitutes one of the most elegant objects in nature. Shortly after, the expansion of the central parts proceeding, these points fall back; the stamens unfold in an interior coronet, the stigmas are laid bare, a grateful perfume arises in the air, and the great object of the flower—the fertilisation of the seeds—is accomplished. Then fold inwards the petals, the flower closes, the fairest of vegetable textures becomes wrinkled, decay begins, and the flower-stalk withdraws itself beneath the water, as if to veil the progress of corruption. But out of this decay arises a new living body; the fruit, curved downwards, swells rapidly, and in a short time a prickly seed-vessel is observed concealed beneath the floating leaves.' The Chatsworth plant continued to bloom profusely, and likewise produced fruit and perfect seeds, from which have been raised a new progeny to replenish our English gardens.

Subsequently to the flowering of the Victoria Lily at Chatsworth, its blossoms have been produced at two other celebrated horticultural establishments: first, at the princely establishment at Syon House in the neighbourhood of London, and afterwards at the Royal Gardens of Kew, the previous want of success in the latter establishment being attributed to the bad quality of the water with which the Aquarium was until recently supplied. The plants at Kew are in great health and vigour, and producing blossoms profusely; and we doubt not that great multitudes of the people of London, as well as visitors to the metropolis, will have availed themselves, before this sheet is published, of the opportunity of seeing one of the most wonderful and splendid productions of nature in the Royal Garden, now freely open to the public.

The plant has also been successfully reared in the lakes of Jamaica and Trinidad from seeds obtained at one of its localities on the Essequibo. The climate of these islands will of course enable it to be easily grown in the open air-ponds and streams, if proper situations are selected; but we fear the influence of the sea will be too powerful to allow of its extensive cultivation, as it will be necessary to confine it to the interior. Sir William Hooker mentions in the 'Kew Garden Miscellany' that his most recent letters from Dr Falconer of the H. E. I. C. Botanic Garden, dated 2d May, announce the arrival of the head gardener, Mr Scott, at that establishment, bringing with him seeds of *Victoria Regia*, which, says Sir William's valued correspondent, 'will constitute a splendid feature in our out-of-door tanks, surrounded with *Nelumbium speciosum*, which we grow almost by the acre, *Euryale ferox*, and *Nymphaea rubra*, &c.; but we have yet to ascertain whether the seed will germinate.' It will indeed be a grand addition to the vegetation of India, already so rich and luxuriant as to strike every European observer with astonishment and admiration.

Dr Campbell of Demerara has recently sent seeds of the Victoria to the Botanic Garden of Edinburgh.

These are not expected to germinate; but the plants, both at Chatsworth and Syon, are fruiting freely, and producing plenty of perfect seeds, so that we may reasonably expect the *Victoria Regia* to be speedily diffused as a cultivated exotic throughout the gardens of Europe.

'MODERN MYTHS'—THE PIG-FACED LADY.

THE Gentleman Bagpiper, it seems, is not the only one of our modern myths resting upon a stratum of reality. Another correspondent—'An Octogenarian'—now comes forward with information equally authentic touching the Pig-faced Lady.

I can by no means claim the distinction of being 'the oldest inhabitant' of this island, having only just completed my eightieth year, but I am quite old enough to have listened in my childhood to many marvellous stories of the Pig-faced Lady, who, in spite of her unnatural physiognomy, was invested in my imagination with all the charms of a princess in some fairy tale, so vivid were the accounts given of her wealth and magnificence—of her bitter trials and noble deeds. Indeed she was as true a being to me in those days as were Cinderella and Blue Beard; nor were their adventures one whit more exciting to my imagination than the history of this Pig-faced Lady, who, while she ate out of a golden trough, wore a veil of golden tissue, so thickly studded with jewels, that no eye could penetrate its lustrous folds; nor was it ever uplifted in the presence of any human being until her adventurous bridegroom, a son of Erin (who, if he loved 'woman,' loved also 'golden store'), claimed at the altar the privilege of beholding his wife. At such a moment he might not be refused; & he drew aside the costly veil which had heretofore concealed her from his view, but started back with dismay and horror at the brute-like physiognomy which met his gaze; and rushing out of the church, abandoned for ever his wealthy but repulsive bride. The unhappy lady, after suffering this cruel mortification, found her only solace in relieving the miseries of others; and while ministering to their wants, gradually obtained a mitigation of her own wretchedness. Thus she became blessed herself while blessing others, and lived to an advanced age, 'filling' to the last 'her odorous lamp with deeds of light.'

Such were my childish impressions of the Pig-faced Lady! In later years, however, the romance of her story has been destroyed by an acquaintance with the real facts of her life, which are as follows:—About one hundred and fifty years ago there died in the neighbourhood of Dublin a gentleman named Stevens, who was possessed of ample means, and left behind him two children, a son and a daughter. The latter was still a child, but the former had arrived at man's estate, and being of a studious and scientific turn of mind, had adopted the profession of medicine as his occupation in life. Mr Stevens bequeathed all his property to his son, leaving his infant daughter wholly dependent on her brother for support and care. And nobly did he fulfil the office thus assigned to him, for he watched over the little one as if it had been his own. The health of the child was precarious; and she suffered so severely from an affection of the eyes, that she could not bear the light of day, or even enjoy the balmy breezes of a summer afternoon. Owing to this infirmity, she always wore within doors a large green shade, which overshadowed her countenance, and never ventured into the open air without being protected from

the cold by a thick veil, which was so carefully wrapped around her, that no one could discern her features beneath its ample folds. This habitual concealment of her face imparted a certain air of mystery to her being, which soon awakened the curiosity of strangers, and excited in many a suspicion of some peculiar deformity in her aspect.

There exists probably in every human mind a love of the marvellous; but among some races the tendency is more largely and more generally developed than in others. This is especially the case with the Irish people, who are so deeply imbued with a love of the wonderful, that they delight in stories which exceed all the ordinary bounds of belief; and if a whisper be breathed among them which savours of the supernatural, it quickly circulates in an exaggerated form, until the viewless shadow grows into a substantive reality. Thus it proved in the case of Griselda Stevens—for so was our heroine called—who, on her approach to womanhood, had the misery to find that public rumour had bestowed upon her a pig's face. Why this peculiar form of physiognomy was allotted to her has never been rightly ascertained. Perhaps it was that Paddy in his gratitude to the '*craythur that pays the rint*,' bethought himself that if the young lady was to have any extraordinary defect, she could not be better off than in resembling this benefactor of Irish humanity. Be this as it may, poor Griselda, who was of a very sensitive disposition, was sorely dismayed on hearing of the rumour which was spread abroad concerning her; and to add to her distress at this painful moment, she was unexpectedly deprived of her beloved brother, Dr Stevens, on whose death she found herself a wealthy heiress, but not the less miserable at having lost her only friend—one who had watched over her, and cared for her since the earliest days of her life.

On opening the will of Dr Richard Stevens, it was found that he had left all his property to his sister Griselda, with the proviso that, in case of her not marrying, she should leave it after her decease for the purpose of founding and endowing an hospital in Dublin.

The unhappy girl was so overwhelmed with grief at the loss she had sustained, that for a while she gave herself up to the most absolute seclusion; and in this state of solitude, the report which had previously met her ear recurred to her memory, and fixed itself painfully in her thoughts, until the idea of appearing once more among her fellow-creatures became quite intolerable to her mind. In compliance, however, with the earnest desire of her physician, she at length ventured out. But to her diseased imagination, it seemed as if every eye were either bent upon her with idle curiosity, or turned away with ill-disguised aversion. So she returned to her solitary home with the inward determination to remove far from the busy haunts of men, and to bury herself for life in some remote and deep seclusion, where she might avoid the scorn and pity of mankind.

Happily for herself and others, the softening influences of benevolence and religion came at this moment to her aid. She pondered over the clause in her brother's will, whereby, in the event of her dying unmarried, the whole of his property was assigned to the purpose of 'founding and endowing an hospital;' and she resolved to fulfil his intention during her own lifetime, and to devote all her wealth and leisure to the accomplishment of the noble object which had been contemplated only conditionally in his testament.

With the quiet energy which so often characterises persons of her shy and retired disposition, Griselda Stevens at once set about this great work. She purchased a large plot of ground in James' Street (Dublin), for the site of an hospital, to which she assigned by

deed to
year f
with a
tion a
portion
patien
pleted
hundr

Mad
up he
had b
dinary
devote
institu
course
and a
and co
to her
with h
nervou
for a w
to con
mates
gratit
impre
chang
painfu
an age
early
spoke
govern
lady o
thema
portra
hospit
remar

Mac
a good
as the
famili
Hospi
and is
wards
physic
walls
ance u
dentat
in the
ring, i
fitting

Suc
And y
and fi
popula
and th
be see
repres
human
old wa
multitu

Mac
ordina
be sai
sort, v
during
flouris

I ha
of the
noble
liar co
face
headed
was w
used
Street
I can
the m
and b

deed the whole of her property, reserving only L.120 a year for her own support during her lifetime, together with a suite of apartments in the hospital. The foundation stone was laid in 1720; and in 1723 a sufficient portion of the building was finished to receive forty patients. Subsequently, the whole edifice was completed, and afforded accommodation for upwards of two hundred patients.

Madame Stevens (for so was she designated) took up her abode without delay in the apartments which had been prepared for her; and renouncing all the ordinary pursuits and recreations of life, she at once devoted herself to the superintendence of the noble institution. Within its walls she resided during a long course of years, proving over a friend to the friendless, and a kindly sympathiser with those who needed pity and consolation. The offices of charity which belonged to her daily life brought her into such frequent contact with her fellow-creatures, that she gradually lost that nervous apprehension of them which had haunted her for a while, like some baneful vision, and even threatened to consume her life by its corroding influence. The inmates of the hospital soon learned to look upon her with gratitude and affection, but out of doors the erroneous impression concerning her appearance remained unchanged. It would seem, however, that she became less painfully sensitive on this subject; for we learn from an aged housekeeper of the establishment, that in her early childhood she had often heard Madame Stevens spoken of by a physician, who had been one of the first governors of the hospital, and who told her that 'that lady often sat in a passage, to allow the public to see for themselves that her pig-facedness was all a fable.' A portrait of her is still hung up in the library of the hospital, and represents the countenance of an old lady, remarkable only for her very kind and comely aspect.

Madame Stevens never married, but after living to a good old age, died in the hospital, which still subsists as the noblest monument of her goodness, and which is familiarly known in Dublin as 'Madame Stevens's Hospital.' It is the most extensive hospital in that city, and is intended more especially for surgical cases. Its wards are visited by the most eminent surgeons and physicians, and there are always residing within its walls skilful practitioners, who are in constant attendance upon the patients. No case of fracture or of accidental injury is ever dismissed from its doors; and even in the dead of night, if the 'accident bell' is heard to ring, immediate admission is given to the sufferer, and fitting attention bestowed upon his case.

Such are the real facts of Madame Stevens's life. And yet, although they are perfectly well authenticated, and familiar to many of her countrymen, she is still popularly spoken of in Ireland as the Pig-faced Lady; and there are not a few who believe that her effigy is to be seen at the hospital, carved in stone, wherein she is represented with a monstrous snout instead of a mere human countenance. So true is the observation of an old writer, that 'prejudice is ever too strong with the multitude for the force of argument.'

Madame Stevens being thus reduced to the level of ordinary mortals, there remains only a word or two to be said concerning a mythical personage of the same sort, who, strange as it may appear, existed in England during the same century in which Madame Stevens flourished in the sister island.

I have recently been informed that about the middle of the eighteenth century there dwelt in London a noble lady of Scottish parentage, who, from some peculiar conformation of her features, was called the Pig-faced Lady; and my informant, a venerable and clear-headed old lady of ninety, assures me that her mother was well acquainted with this noble Pig-faced Lady, and used frequently to visit her at her house in Sloane Street. Further information on this mysterious subject I cannot give you; but perhaps some devout lover of the marvellous may make a pilgrimage to Sloane Street, and by patient research and investigation, discover the

real facts concerning this noble lady—whether she was amiable and human-faced, like Madame Stevens; or a sort of semi-monster, such as was portrayed in the popular traditions of that day.

LETTERS.

NEITHER history nor tradition tells us aught of the first letter—who was its writer, and on what occasion; how it was transmitted, or in what manner answered. The Chinese, the Hindoo, and the Scandinavian mythologies had each tales regarding the inventors of writing, and the rest of those that by pre-eminence may be called human arts; but concerning the beginner of mankind's epistolary correspondence, neither they nor the classic poets—who, by the way, volunteered many an ingenious story on subjects far less important—have given us the least account.

Pope says—

'Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid—
Some banished lover, or some captive maid.'

The poet evidently refers to the letter-writing art, and it may be so, for aught we can tell; but with all submission to his superior knowledge, banished lovers and captive maids have rarely been the transmitters of such useful inventions. Certainly, whoever first commenced letter-writing, the world has been long his debtor. It is long since the Samaritans wrote a letter against the builders of Jerusalem to Artaxerxes, and it may be observed that the said letter is the earliest epistle mentioned in any history. Older communications appear to have been always verbal, by means of heralds and messengers. Homer, in his account of all the news received and sent between the Greeks and Trojans, never refers to a single letter. The scribe's occupation was not altogether unknown in those days, but it must have been brought to considerable perfection before efforts in the epistolary style were made. That ancient language of picture and symbol, in which Egypt expressed her wisdom, was undoubtedly the earliest mode of writing; but however calculated to preserve the memory of great historical events amid the daily life, and toil, and changes of nations, it was but poorly fitted for the purpose of correspondence. How could compliments or insinuations be conveyed by such an autograph? Letters must have been brief and scanty in the hieroglyphic times; yet doubtless not without some representations, for the unalphabetized of mankind have combined to hold mutual intelligence by many a sign and emblem, especially in those affairs designated of the heart, as they above all others contribute to ingenuity. Hence came the Eastern language of flowers, which, with Oriental literature and mythology, is now partially known over the civilised world. In its native clime this natural alphabet is said to be so distinctly understood, that the most minute intimations are expressed by it; but the more frank and practical courtship of Europe has always preferred the pen as its channel of communication, which, besides its greater power of enlargement, prevents those mistakes into which the imperfectly-initiated are apt to fall with flowers. For instance, there is a story of a British officer in Andalusia who, having made a deep impression on the heart of a certain alcaide's daughter, in one of the small old towns of that half-Moorish province, and receiving from her one morning a bouquet, the significance of which was—'My mother is in the way now, but come to visit me in the twilight,' supposed in his ignorance, and perhaps presumption, that he was invited to an immediate appointment: whereupon he hurried to the house, just in time to meet the venerable signora, when the lady of his heart boxed his ears with her own fair hands, and vowed she would never again send flowers to a stupid Englishman.

In fine contrast to this sample of misunderstanding stands forth the dexterity with which an Irish serving-maid contrived to signify, by symbols of her own invention, her pleasure on a still more trying occasion. Poor

Kitty, though a belle in her class, could neither read nor write; but her mistress's grown-up daughter undertook, as a labour of love, to carry on a correspondence between her and a certain hedge schoolmaster in the neighbourhood, who laid siege to Kitty's heart and hand on account of a small deposit in the savings' bank, and that proverbial attraction which learned men are said to find in rather illiterate ladies. The schoolmaster was, however, providently desirous of fixing on the mind of his future partner an impression of his own superiority sufficient to outlast the wear and tear of married life, and therefore wooed chiefly by long and learned letters, to which Kitty responded in her best style, leaving to her volunteer secretary what she called 'the grammar' of her replies; besides declaring, with many hardly-complimentary observations on the schoolmaster's person and manners, that she had not the slightest interest in the affair, but only, in her own words, 'to keep up the craythur's heart.' Thus the courtship had proceeded prosperously through all the usual stages, when at length the question, *par excellence*, was popped (of course on paper). Kitty heard that epistle read with wonted disdain; but alas for human confidence! there was something in her answer with which she could not trust the writer of so many; for after all her scorn, Kitty intended to say 'Yes,' and her mode of doing so merits commemoration. In solitude that evening, beside the kitchen hearth, she sketched on a sheet of white paper, with the help of a burned stick, a rude representation of a human eye, and enclosing a small quantity of wool, despatched it next morning to the impatient swain by the hand of his head scholar—those primitive tokens expressing to Kitty's mind the important words, 'I will,' which the teacher, strange to say, understood in the same sense; and their wedding took place, to the unqualified amazement of Kitty's amanuensis. Epistolary forms and fashions have had their mutations like all other human things. The old Eastern mode of securing letters was by folding them in the shape of a roll, and winding round them a thin cord, generally of silk, as the luxury of letters was known only to the rich. In the case of billets-doux—for Eastern lovers did not always speak by flowers when the pen was at their command—enthusiastic ladies sometimes substituted those long silken strings which, from time immemorial, the Oriental women have worn in their hair—a proceeding which was understood to indicate the deepest shade of devotedness.

The mythic importance attached to these hair-strings must indeed have been great, as history records that a certain prince, whose dominions were threatened by Mithridates, the great king of Pontus—like other great men, a troublesome neighbour in his day—sent the latter a submissive epistle, offering homage and tribute, and bound with the hair-strings of his nineteen wives, to signify that he and his were entirely at the monarch's service. The custom of securing letters by cords came through the Greek empire into Europe in the middle ages; but the use of the seal seems still earlier, as it is mentioned in Old Testament history. Ancient writers speak of it as an Egyptian invention, together with the signet ring, so indispensable throughout the classic world, and regarded as the special appendage of sovereignty in the feudal times.

Of all the letters the Egyptians wrote on their papyrus, no specimens now remain, except perhaps those scrolls in the hands of mummies, referred to by early Christian authors as epistles sent to deceased friends by those unreturning messengers; and they, it may be presumed, were at the best but formal letters, since no reply was ever expected. The classic formula for correspondence, 'Augustus to Julius, greeting,' is now preserved only in letters-patent, or similar documents. That brief and unvarying style has long been superseded in every language of Europe by a graduated series of endearing terms, rising with the temperature of attachment, from 'Dear Sir,' or 'Madam,' to a limit scarcely assignable, but it lies somewhere near 'Adored Thomas' or 'Margery.'

Masters of the fine arts as they were, those ancient

nations came far short of the moderns in that of letter-writing. The few specimens of their correspondence that have reached us are either on matters of public business, or dry and dignified epistles from one great man to another, with little life and less gossip in them. It is probable that their practice was somewhat limited, as the facilities of the post-office were unknown to Greece and Rome—the entire agency of modern communication being to the classic world represented only by the post or courier, who formed part of the retinue of every wealthy family. The method of writing in the third person, so suitable for heavy business or ceremony, is evidently a classical bequest. It does not appear to have been practised in England till about the beginning of the eighteenth century, though it was early in use among the continental nations. Louis XIV. used to say it was the only style in which a prince should permit himself to write; and in the far East, where it had been in still older repute, the Chinese informed his missionaries that ever since they had been taught manners by the Emperor Tae Sing, no inferior would presume to address a man of rank in any other form, especially as a law of the said emperor had appointed twenty blows of the bamboo for that infraction of plebeian duty.

Of all human writings, letters have been preserved in the smallest proportion. How few of those which the best-informed actors in great events or revolutions must have written, have been copied by elder historians or biographers! Such documents are, by their nature, at once the least accessible and the most liable to destruction; private interests, feelings, and fears, keep watch against their publication; but even when these were taken out of the way, it is to be feared that the narrow-minded habit of overlooking all their wisdom deemed minute, which has made the chronicles of nations so scanty, and many a life in two volumes such dull reading, also induced learned compilers to neglect, as beneath their search, the old letters bundled up in dusty chest or corner, till they served a succeeding generation for waste paper. Such mistakes have occasioned heavy losses to literature. Time leaves no witnesses in the matters of history and character equal to these. How many a disputed tale, on which party controversy has raged, and laborious volumes have been written, would the preservation of one authentic note have set at rest for ever?

The practical learning of our times, in its search after confirmation and detail, amply recognises the importance of old letters; and good service has been done to both history and moral philosophy by those who have given them to the press from state-paper office and family bureau. In such collections one sees the world's talked-of-and-storied people as they were in private business, in social relations, and in what might be justly designated the status of their souls. In spite of the proverbial truisms, that paper never refuses ink, and falsehood can be written as well as spoken, the correspondence of every man contains an actual portrait of the writer's mind, visible through a thousand disguises, and bearing the same relation to the inward man that a correct picture bears to the living face; without change or motion, indeed, but telling the beholder of both, and indicating what direction they are likely to take.

The sayings of wits and the doings of oddities long survive them in the memory of their generation—the actions of public men live in history, and the genius of authors in their works; but in every case the individual, him or herself, lives in letters. One who carried this idea still further, once called letter-writing the Daguerreotypes of mind—ever leaving on the paper its true likeness, according to the light in which it stands for the time; and he added, like the sun's painting, apt to be most correct in the less pleasant lines and lineaments. Unluckily this mental portraiture, after the fashion of other matters, seems less perceptible to the most interested parties. Many an unconcerned reader can at this day trace in Swift's epistles the self-care and worship which neither Stella nor Vanessa could have seen without a change in their histories.

Card
nary g
but on
observ
selves.
it does
most
world
the Ca
whose
between
in whic
a poor
less to
credit
of the
kings
the Fr
Count
succeed
a cert
whose
lament
always
count's
the ju
to hav
sight,
letter,
admiri
epistle
marria
period
some y
to an
Free
letter-
nation
a sort
letters
This
Never
was no
fort or
tion of
increa
most
world
descri
origin
French
that c
confes
madam
poor,
the la
the co
interd
and it
talked
Vellan
his ge
all Eu
reache
letters
the ro
them
Whet
to mi
her o
her b
doux
as the
Ind
rage
Beau
her b

Cardinal Mazarin, however, used to say that an ordinary gentleman might deceive in a series of interviews, but only a complete tactician in one of letters; 'that is,' observed his eminence, 'if people don't deceive themselves.' The cardinal's statement strikingly recalls, if it does not explain, a contemporary remark, that the most successful courtships, in the fullest sense of that word, were carried on with the help of secret proxies in the corresponding department. The Count de Lauson, whose days, even to a good old age, were equally divided between the Bastille and the above-mentioned pursuit, in which he must have been rather at home—for though a poor gentleman, with little pretensions to family, still less to fortune, and no talents that the world gave him credit for, he contrived in his youth to marry a princess of the blood-royal of France, who had refused half the kings of Europe, and been an Amazon in the war of the Fronde; and in his age a wealthy court belle—this Count de Lauson declared that he could never have succeeded in his endeavours after high matches but for a certain professional letter-writer of Versailles, on whose death he is said to have poured forth unfeigned lamentations in the presence of his last lady. Letters always appear to have been peculiarly powerful in the count's country. Madame de Genlis, whose 'Tales of the Castle' and 'Knights of the Swan' delighted at least the juveniles of a now-departing generation, was believed to have made a complete conquest, even before first sight, of the nobleman whose name she bears, by a single letter, addressed to a lady at whose house he was an admiring visitor, when she unadvisedly showed him the epistle. An anxiously-sought introduction and a speedy marriage followed; but the scandal-mongers of the period averred that their separation, which took place some years after, was owing, among other circumstances, to an anonymous letter received by the baron himself.

Frederick the Great used to call the French the first letter-writers of Europe, and it is probable that their national turn for clever gossip gives to their epistles a sort of general interest, for in no other country have letters formed so large a portion of published literature. This was particularly true in Frederick's own age. Never did a death or a quarrel take place—and the letter was not rare among the *savants* of that period—but comfort or satisfaction was sought in the immediate publication of every scrap of correspondence, to the manifold increase of disputes and heartburnings. Some of the most amusing volumes extant were thus given to the world; and Madame Dunoier's, though scarcely of that description, must not be forgotten from the tale of its origin. When Voltaire was a young attaché to the French embassy at the Hague, with no reputation but that of being rather unmanageable by his family and confessor, he was on billet-doux terms, it seems, with madame's daughter; but madame found out that he was poor, or something like it, for in no other respect was the lady scrupulous. Her veto was therefore laid on the correspondence, which nevertheless survived under interdict for some time, till Voltaire left the embassy, and it died of itself; for he wrote the 'Oedipe,' became talked of by all Paris, and noticed by the Marquis de Vellars. Gradually the man grew great in the eyes of his generation, his fame as a poet and philosopher filled all Europe, not forgetting the Hague; and when it had reached the zenith, Madame Dunoier collected his letters to her daughter, which remained in her custody, the receiver being by this time married, and published them at her own expense in a handsomely-bound volume. Whether to be revenged on fortune for permitting her to miss so notable a son-in-law, or on him for obeying her commands, it is now impossible to determine, but her book served to show the world that the early billets-doux of a great genius might be just as milk-and-watery as those of common people.

Indeed letter-publishing seems to have been quite the rage in the eighteenth century. The Secretary La Beaumelle stole all Madame de Maintenon's letters to her brother, setting forth her difficulties in humouring

Louis XIV., and printed them at Copenhagen. Some copies were obligingly forwarded to Versailles, but madame assured the king they were beneath his royal notice, which, being confirmed by his confessor, was of course believed; but the transaction looks like retributive justice on her well-known practice of keeping sundry post-office clerks in pay to furnish a copy of every letter sent or received by the principal persons at court, not excepting even the royal family. Among these were copied the celebrated letters of the Dauphiness Charlotte Elizabeth of Bavaria, which now, in good plain print, present to all readers of taste in that department a complete chronicle of all the scandal, gossip, and follies of Versailles; and that princess, whose pride stood so high on her family quarterings, was gravely rebuked, and obliged to ask pardon seven years after for certain uncomplimentary passages in her epistles regarding madame when she first came to court as nursery governess to the king's children.

Dangerous approvers have old letters been from throne to cottage. Many a specious statement, many a fair profession, ay, and many a promising friendship, have they shaken down. Readers, have a care of your deposits in the post-office; they are pledges given to time. It is strange, though true, how few historical characters are benefited by the publication of their letters, surviving, as such things do, contemporary interests and prejudices, as well as personal influence.

There must be something of the salt that will not lose its savour there to make them serve the writers in the eyes of posterity. What strange confidence the age of hoop and periwig put in letter-writing! Divines published their volumes of controversy or pious exhortation, made up of epistles to imaginary friends. Mrs Chapone's letters to her niece nourished the wisdom of British belles; while Lord Chesterfield's to his son were the glass of fashion for their brothers; and Madame de Sévigné's to her daughter, written expressly for publication, afforded models for the wit, elegance, and sentiment of every circle wherein her language was spoken. The epistolary style's inherent power of characterisation naturally recommended it in the construction of their novels, and many a tale of fame and fashion in its day, besides 'La Nouvelle Heloise,' and 'Sir Charles Grandison,' was ingeniously composed of presumed correspondence.

Chinese literature is said to possess numerous fictions in that form; but it is not to be regretted that modern novelists, whose name is more than legion, pass it by in favour of direct narrative; for, under the best arrangement, a number of letters can give but a series of views, telling the principals' tale in a broken, sketchy fashion, and leaving little room for the fortunes of second-rate people, who are not always the lowest company in a novel. Tours and travels tell pleasantly in letters, supposing of course the letters to be well written; for some minds have such a wondrous affinity for the commonplace, that the most important event or exciting scene sinks to the every-day level under their pen.

Sir Andrew Mitchell, who was British ambassador to Prussia during the seven years' war, writes from the camp before Prague concerning that great battle which turned the scale of power in Germany, and served Europe to talk of till the French Revolution, in a style, but for quotations from the bulletin, suitable to the election of some civic alderman; and a less known traveller, writing to a friend of the glare of Moscow's burning, which he saw from a Russian country-house, reddening the northern night, describes it as 'a very impressive circumstance, calculated to make one guard against fire.'

It has been remarked that, as a general rule, poets write the best, and schoolmasters the worst letters. That the former, in common with literary men of any order, should be at least interesting correspondents, seems probable; but why the instructors of youth should be generally stricken with deficiency in letter-writing is not so easy of explanation.

Some one has also observed that, independent of mental gifts and graces, characters somewhat cold and frivolous generally write the most finished letters, and instanced Horace Walpole, whose published epistles even in our distant day commanded a degree of attention never to be claimed by those of his superior contemporaries—the highly-gifted Burke and the profound Johnson. It may be that the court gossip in and upon which Horace lived has done much for the letters from Strawberry Hill, but the vein must have been there; and the abilities that shine in the world of action or of letters, the conversational talents or worthiness of soul, do not make the cleverest correspondent.

Count Stadion, prime minister to the elector of Mayence, according to Goethe, hit on an easy method of making an impression by letters. He obliged his secretary, Laroche, to practise his handwriting, which it appears he did with considerable success; and, says the poet in his own memoirs, being 'passionately attached to a lady of rank and talent, if he stopped in her society till late at night, his secretary was in the meantime sitting at home, and hammering out the most ardent love-letters; the count chose one of these, and sent it that very night to his beloved, who was thus necessarily convinced of the inextinguishable fire of her passionate adorer.'

'Hélas!' as Madame d'Epigny remarked when turning over the printed epistles of a deceased friend, 'one can never guess how little truth the post brings one;' but from the following tradition, it would seem the less the better. Among the old-world stories of Germany are many regarding a fairy chief or king, known from rustic times as Number Nip, or Count-the-Turnips. One of his pranks was played in an ancient inn of Heidelberg, where, on a December night, he mixed the wine with a certain essence distilled from the flowers of Eldland, which had the effect of making all who tasted it tell nothing but truth with either tongue or pen till the morning. The series of quarrels which took place in consequence round the kitchen fire belong not to the present subject; but in the red parlour there sat, all from Vienna, a poet, a student, a merchant, and a priest. After supper, each of these remembered that he had a letter to write—the poet to his mistress, the merchant to his wife, the priest to the bishop of his diocese, and the student to his bachelor uncle, Herr Weisser of Leopoldstadt, who had long declared him his heir. Somehow next morning they were all at the post-office beseeching their letters back; but the mail had been despatched, and the tale records how, after that evening's correspondence, the poet's liege lady dismissed him, the merchant and his wife were divorced, the priest never obtained preferment, and none of the letters were answered except the student's, whom Herr Weisser complimented on having turned out such a prudent, sensible young man, but hoped he wouldn't feel disappointed, as himself intended to marry immediately.

The most curiously-characteristic letters now made public property are those of Sir Walter Raleigh to Queen Elizabeth, written from the Tower (to which the historian of the world was committed for a wedding without her majesty's permission), and in the highest tone of desperation that a banished lover could assume; the correspondence between Frederick of Prussia and Voltaire, then of France, after what was called their reconciliation, beginning with the grandest compliments, and ending with reminiscences of quite another kind, particularly that from the royal pen, which opens with, 'You who from the heights of philosophy look down on the weakness and follies of mankind,' and concludes with the charge of appropriating candle-ends; and the epistles of Rousseau during his residence in England, which alternate between discoveries of black conspiracies against his life and fame, and threats of adjournment to the workhouse, if his friends would not assist him to live in a better style than most country gentlemen of the period.

There are printed samples with whose writers fame

has been busy; but who can say what curiosities of letter-writing daily mingle with the mass that pours through the London Post-Office? Can it be this continual custody and superintendence of so large a share of their fellow-creatures' wisdom, fortunes, and folly, that endows post-office functionaries in every quarter with such an amount of proverbial crustiness, if the word be admissible? Do they, from the nature of their business, know too much about the public to think them worth civility, so that nobody has yet discovered a very polite postmaster or man? A strange life the latter leads in our great cities. The truest representative of destiny seems his scarlet coat, seen far through street and lane: at one door he leaves the news of failure and ruin, and at another the intelligence of a legacy. Here his message is the death of a friend, while to the next neighbour he brings tidings of one long absent, or the increase of kindred; but without care or knowledge of their import, he leaves his letters at house after house, and goes his way like a servant of time and fortune, as he is, to return again, it may be, with far different news as their tireless wheels move on. Are there any that have never watched for his coming? The dwellers in palaces and garrets, large families, and solitary lodgers, alike look out for him with anxious hope or fear. Strange it is for one to read over those letters so watched and waited for when years have passed over since their date, and the days of the business, the friendship, or perhaps the wooing, to which they belong are numbered and finished!

How has the world without and within been altered to the correspondents since they were written? Has success or ill fortune attended the speculations by which they set such store? What have been their effects on outward circumstances, and through that certain channel on the men? Has the love been forgotten? Have the friends become strange, or enemies? Have some of them passed to the land whose inhabitants send back no letters? And how have their places been filled? Truly, if evidence were ever wanting regarding the uncertainty of all that rests on earth, it might be found in a packet of old letters.

NEWS FROM NATAL.

[The following letter refers to a paper in No. 303 of this Journal, the object of which was to urge intending emigrants to make full inquiry before throwing themselves into an untried field. We remarked, with reference to the humbler class of emigrants, who were more specially invited, that there was already a labouring population upon the spot, in the persons of the Boers and Caffres.]

PIETERMARITZBURG, NATAL, April 15, 1850.

Your letter, dated December 14th, reached me this morning; and I lose no time in answering your questions *seriatim*.

The land is, so far as I know, for my experience in this respect is limited, very variable in point of fertility. Seeds soon germinate, and break through, but in the neighbourhood of this town the soil is a basaltic or schistose sand, which is of little use without manure, but will do wonders *with* it. Three crops of oats may easily be had in a year; wheat I cannot speak about, as there are so many conflicting opinions. But beyond the Umgeni, about twenty miles hence, a practical Scotch farmer, a clever and intelligent man, tells me the soil is quite another thing, being some of the very best he ever saw, and needing no manure. There is also, I believe, good land about the coast; but the Klip river, about a hundred or more miles from hence, is universally agreed to be the best agricultural district. Of the country at a distance I have no personal or accurate knowledge; but freestone is brought from a little distance. The mode of cultivation is usually by a plough drawn by oxen; very strong ploughs are necessary, on account of the difficulty of minutely controlling the motions of a dozen or fewer oxen, some of which must be more or less imperfectly trained. I never heard any one mention, even approximately, the height of this town above the sea-level,

but at a broad guess, I should think it must be between 600 and 1000 feet. The country rises, however, rapidly beyond it, so that in winter the snow can be seen from my door on the mountain-tops, and even sometimes blocks the roads for a short time. Thirty miles further on from this they tell me a fire is very comfortable nine months out of the year.

About 600 soldiers are garrisoned in the fort here, and perhaps 400 more in the other parts of the district. We have also a trained Caffre corps; but whether this force is sufficient for all possible contingencies I cannot say. No one here seems to anticipate any trouble from the Zoolahs under Panda, who is said to have retired further to the north; and as to the poor creatures living in the district—the broken remains of, as I hear, about a hundred different tribes—when you let us know the dogs and horses have combined to expel the human race from Essex, then you may expect to hear that these simple, faithful people have conspired to expel us white folk from Natal. The only outcry here is, that there are not Caffres enough to be 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' for the colonists. Their *inkosi inkulu*, or 'great chief,' is a government officer, who has an almost absolute influence over them, and who recently brought away wagon-loads of silver, some gold, and quantities of cattle from among them, to the amount of L.7000 or more, without a single military attendant, either black or white. Nor is there anything to apprehend from the emigrant Boers. Two of their former leaders I am in constant intercourse with, and more gentlemanly and pleasant men you would not easily meet with at the 'West End.' Those who have gone over the Vaal river are, it is said, still restless under Pretorius, an African Smith O'Brien; but their quarrels are with the Grigua and Basutu chiefs and the Cape government. They are a long way off from this district, and have completely abandoned all designs upon it; so that there is little more probability of Pretorius coming here than there was of Mitchel being crowned in London. I am surprised that 'Chambers's Journal' (usually an intelligent, or at least a cautious periodical) should recently have represented the Boers and Caffres as obstacles to colonisation here. 'More Boers and more Caffres' is the aspiration of every one here: both governors and governed, Dutch and English, are unanimous on this point. 'Give me back the Boers, and you may all go where you like,' said an intelligent and wealthy merchant in my hearing to a military officer; and the officer could not gainsay the preference shown. In short, I should have much less apprehension of robbery or violence in travelling alone, or with a couple of Caffres for two years in this part of the world, than I should in walking two hours after dark in some of the thoroughfares of London. There is a yeomanry cavalry belonging to this town; but it is like most similar volunteer corps—principally child's play at soldiering.

As to Byrne's Company, much more might be said than I could put in this letter. Owing to several causes, but principally, I think, in consequence of the slow and inefficient conduct of the government here, the gross ignorance of the home authorities, and the capricious mood of Sir Harry Smith at Cape Town, under which two latter powers the local authorities here are placed, the affairs of the emigrants are fallen into lamentable confusion; and not one, so far as I know, is properly and legally settled on his land. This has naturally rendered many of them dissatisfied, and impoverished those who had not handicraft trades to go to. Still, I have not heard of any instance of actual privation, and in my own mind I have little doubt that at the worst they can, if they choose, all earn a present subsistence, and look forward to something better when the chaos is reduced to order. It is useless, however, to make any account of the twenty-acres-land bounty. Whether you would not get the cheapest passage in Byrne's ships, is another question; but you would find it most comfortable to come by an East-Indiaman to

Cape Town, and thence by a coaster, especially if you have children, and are anxious for their health or lives. This, however, would perhaps involve twice or thrice the expense. Some emigrant ships (Byrne's) have, as I hear, been very comfortable, and others very much the reverse—all greatly depending on the emigrants themselves as a body. Do not buy land in England: this is about the worst thing you could do: but first come and see, and choose, and hear prices, and compare them. Country land is quoted at all figures, from 6d. to L.1 per acre, according to quality, situation, circumstances, and tenure, the last not the least important.

The water is very good everywhere, so far as I hear, except the water of the port or bay and its immediate neighbourhood, which is not wholesome to newcomers. This past summer has been very dry, the first instance of the kind for eleven years at least. Generally, the summer is wet—some say *very wet*—and the winter very dry. The farmers here, coming mostly from the old colony, insist much on irrigation; but according to my small experience, I do not think an English farmer would attach much importance to it. As to wild beasts, there are, I believe, a few leopards of different species (here called tigers), perhaps a lion here and there, but scarcely ever heard of; hyenas and jackals are numerous, but the latter are harmless enough. A few days ago I saw some urchins playing with one they had just caught; after which one of them took it up by the back of the neck, and carried it down the town, just as you would a dog. Hyenas (here called wolves) tease the cattle at night; but I have never heard but once, and that only very vaguely, of an ox being killed by them. The oxen and horses here are usually turned out all night to graze on the open plains and hills, so you may suppose there is nothing very formidable to be dreaded. Snakes seem to be numerous, and some are very poisonous. I have, however, never heard of the death of any person here from their bite, nor even of any one being bitten in this district. A horseman, however, had his steed bitten suddenly a few weeks ago not far from the town, and it died in a short time afterwards.

Houses in this town are built either of 'green' or unburnt bricks, plastered over, or else burnt bricks, or else of the schist-stone so abundant here, which works very easily, and hardens by exposure to the air. At D'Urban they are mostly brick, or else 'wattle and dab.' There is at present abundant work for smiths, carpenters, masons, &c. and there would be more were there more capital in the colony. Journeymen get 6s. or 7s. per day. Horses are never shod here: iron is procured from Cape Colony—both Swedish, which is preferred, and English, which is considered not tough enough for the kind of work most in demand. It would pay well to import iron, it being very dear here; and the same may be said, I suppose, of a smith's set of tools. Coal is found in the district—a kind of anthracite or Welsh coal—but is little noticed or worked at present. Newcastle coals are, I believe, preferred for smiths' work, but are of course very dear—about L.7 or L.9 per ton. Carpenters' work is mostly about houses at present. There are no fences, and therefore no gates. The farmer in the country keeps his eye on his ploughed field by day, or sets a Caffre to see that no cattle get in; and at night he shuts up his cattle in a 'kraal' or pound, and goes to bed in peace, being perhaps half-a-dozen or more miles from the nearest ox likely to trespass.

Of course this state of things will not last for ever. A carpenter cannot, however, fail to do well in making furniture, and fitting up houses. The timber used here is principally 'yellow wood,' which is like deal, only even more splintery in the grain; 'stinkwood,' which is a dark-grained wood, answering in its uses almost to mahogany; 'thornwood,' tough, and answering perhaps in some degree to ash; 'wild lemon,' a still tougher wood; and some others, with which I am unacquainted. Timber of all sorts may be easily procured from the sawyers

or bushmen, as they are here called, who go out into the woods, cut down the trees, and saw them up into plank, quartering, scantling, beams, and what not. A yellow wood half or three-quarters inch plank, 20 feet by 1, sells for 3s. 6d. green, or 4s. dry. Deal is also imported from Sweden sometimes. As to wheelwrights, it is generally considered here that no English artisan can make a wheel that will bear the tremendous bumping and jolting of the wagons on the primitive roads of this part of the world. If any Englishman thinks he can, he may come and try his hand with the Dutchmen. Wagon-making is a business of itself, at which many fortunes have been made: a wagon is as strong as a ship, and costs, when new, about L.80 or L.90! Carts there are but three or four in the whole country, and between the roads and the oxen I suppose they will not soon be found extensively useful. One reason why oxen are so much used, is their cheapness of purchase—say 30s., or 40s., or perhaps 50s. if well trained—and of their keep, which costs just nothing. Another is, that horses are very liable to the horse-sickness (a bronchitic and pulmonary complaint of an acute and fatal type) in some parts of the district. I think your capital of L.400 would be sufficient for you to turn yourself round on as a farmer; but much depends on your domestic circumstances and your habits of life. If you can live in a Caffre hut for a year or two, and rough it in a wagon or in the open air, you cannot fail to get on fast; but if you have a wife and family, who would require to have a house at first, and comforts and civilisation, the case would be wonderfully different: you might then perhaps bring L.1000, and yet see the last penny of it before you got another.

POETS AND POESY.

Few chance-breathed syllables! ye bring to me
A joy full deep, though voiceless it must be.

How many thoughts an idly-spoken word
Doth oft awaken! even as when a bird
Lights on a flowery spray—in some sweet spot,
Quiet and shady, where winds wanton not
Amid the young green leaves, nor ever creep
To kiss the bright buds from their balmy sleep—
The fair flowers then all nod and dance, and fling
Their treasured odour o'er that gay bird's wing!
And scarcely can our slumbering thoughts be stirred
By the soft breathing of a dearer word
Than this one—poesy.

Oh glorious light,
That with thy splendour makest all things bright!
Thou loving angel! on whose brow the flowers
Still keep the bloom they wore in Eden's bowers:
Can there be those upon whose spirit all
Thy fair creations unreflected fall?
Alas! although in every soul doth rest
The capability of being blessed;
And each must have the latent power to prize
What it was formed to love, yet oft it lies
Self-shadowed 'mid the sunshine, with no thirst
For fadeless light, no deep desire to burst
Its weary bondage, and to rise above
The cloud that shuts out beauty, truth, and love:
The elements of Heaven, where none too true
May dim the joy so faintly dreamed of here.

But few although her worshippers may be,
And only maskers come who bend the knee,
Yet beauty is eternal! though on earth
Made visible in things of mortal birth.
Thus though some lyre which hymns her praise be flung
To drear decay, unlaurelled and unstrung;
Though the deep music of some minstrel's lay,
With his own life, unhonoured pass away;
The soul of poetry still lives! still breathes
Its melodies to gentle hearts, and wreathes
For them its fairy flowers; still hath its spell
The power to wake the lovely things that dwell,
Unseen, around us in the mystic air,
Yea, even as Music liveth ever there!

Though silent oft the spirit-voice must be,
Till, with a trembling hand, man sets it free;
By genius, almost divinely, taught
To vocalise his heart's unworried thought.

Oh priest of Beauty! dweller 'mid the blaze
Of that eternal light; whose faintest rays
Can, even on earth's most perishable things,
Shed bloom like that an angel's pinion flings!
Rejoice! rejoice! that thus to thee are given
The splendours of an intellectual heaven.
Yet, poet! when from thine unclouded skies
Recalled a while by still unbroken ties,
Thou, with thy fellow-man, again dost tread
The common earth, let no vain tears be shed,
That thus thy human heart must often share
The weary lot which others always bear.
But strive thou rather ever to reveal
To all the glories thou hast power to feel;
Nor deem thou that the blessings of thy God
Are for thyself alone on thee bestowed.
Fear not, and faint not! though too oft thy strain
Seem breathed, like winds o'er desert wastes, in vain;
Hearts yet shall feel the magic of thy lay,
And own that in thy soul is shrouded a ray
Divine, though tinged ever with the hue
Of thine own thought—the urn it streameth through.

Oh! never till life's 'silver cord' is broken,
May poets' words to me be vainly spoken!
Aye to earth's crownless kings my spirit bends,
And owns the sceptre whose mild away extends
Wide as humanity can spread its love,
Or as its wandering fancies e'er can rove;
Far as its chainless thought can reach, and high
As its most soaring hope may dare to fly.

We all owe homage to the mighty few,
Who—since the days when human life was new,
And Time's broad flood was but an infant stream,
Bright with the radiance of the sun's first beam—
Have, as they floated down its tide, flung in
The gems they toiled from their own thoughts to win;
And scattered o'er the waters leaves and flowers,
That by the river bloomed; those wreaths are ours,
Ours every sparkling jewel! for true thought
Is deathless: 'twere too sad to deem that aught
Had perished utterly! Though many a name
Was breathed too faintly by the lip of Fame
For us to catch its tone; though many a lay,
Heart echoed off, hath seemed to pass away;
Ere it grew silent, all its soul it gave
To those whose name and words outlive the grave.
A spirit-life have thoughts by poets breathed;
Oh! let us prize the wealth they have bequeathed;
Nor idly murmur, though it be not ours
To give to after-times bright gems of flowers.

F. F.

REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM.

It is stated in the 'Berliner Allgemeine Kirchen Zeitung' that the Jews have obtained a firmman from the Porte, granting them permission to build a temple on Mount Zion. The projected edifice is, it is said, to equal Solomon's Temple in magnificence.

'READING MADE EASY!'

M. Carnot has presented a petition to the Assembly from M. Jules Aleix, of Paris, stating that he has discovered a new method of education, by which a child may be taught to read in fifteen lessons of one hour each. A grant of 50,000 francs is asked for a model school.—*French paper.*

Just Published, Price 7d.

CHAMBERS'S PAPERS FOR THE PEOPLE.

Part VII.

CONTENTS.—No. 25. The Bourbon Family.—26. California.—27. The Black Pocket-Book: a Tale.—28. Fencible.

Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, High Street, Edinburgh. Also sold by D. CHAMBERS, 29 Argyle Street, Glasgow; W. S. ORR, Amen Corner, London; and J. McGLASHAN, 21 D'Oliver Street, Dublin.—Printed by W. & R. CHAMBERS, Edinburgh.